

DOUBLE BLUE: BLUE ECONOMY AND BLUE GROWTH

The ocean is one of the most valuable natural resources of our planet. We need to preserve and maintain its health, resilience and productivity for the prosperity of present and future generations — in other words, we need to achieve the **sustainable development** of the “Seven Seas”.

A few months ago, José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said: “Major changes in how the planet’s marine resources are managed and used are needed to safeguard global food security and ensure the well-being of coastal and island countries. We cannot keep using marine and aquatic resources as if they were endless. And we cannot keep using our oceans as a waste pool. Serious threats to ocean health such as pollution, overfishing, and altered weather and rising sea levels resulting from climate change must be tackled in earnest – starting now. The health of our planet itself, our health and food security, depends on how we treat the **blue world.**”



According to the ideas so eloquently expressed by its Director-General, FAO established the Blue Growth Initiative, which embraces the concept of Blue Economy. What are, then, Blue Economy and Blue Growth?

The concept of a **Blue Economy** emphasizes conservation and sustainable management, based on the premise that healthy ocean ecosystems are more productive and represent the only way to ensure sustainable ocean-based economies. **Blue Growth** is the long term strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors. It aims to further harness the potential of oceans, seas and coasts.

More specifically, the Blue Growth Initiative aims to:

- Eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing and instead **incentivize approaches which improve conservation, build sustainable fisheries** and end illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Develop those sectors with a high potential for **sustainable jobs** such as aquaculture, tourism, marine biotechnology
- Ensure tailor-made measures that **foster cooperation between countries**
- Act as a **catalyst for policy development**, investment and innovation in support of food security, poverty reduction, and the sustainable management of aquatic resources.

How will Blue Growth be implemented?

- **Aquaculture** – farming of fish, shellfish and marine plants in a responsible manner
- **Blue biotechnology** – exploring the sea's biodiversity which could enable us to develop new pharmaceuticals or industrial enzymes that can withstand extreme conditions and have a high economic value
- **Coastal and maritime tourism** – developing and implementing maritime spatial plans and coastal management strategies
- **Mineral resources** – providing the economic incentive to explore the mineral resources of the seabed

- **Blue energy** – tapping into the next generation of offshore renewable energy to create opportunities for the creation of jobs and energy security

Through the Blue Growth Initiative, FAO will assist countries in developing and implementing agendas based on Blue Economy and Blue Growth. As stated by Gesine Meissner, it is of crucial importance to find the right balance between sustainable development and economic growth. Therefore, the increase of maritime and marine activities needs to be well coordinated.

In March of this year, Maria do Céu Patrão Neves emphasized that **blue growth must remain green**. She said: “Blue growth is no longer a dream but is becoming a reality. We now need more tools and better information to ensure that this reality is done in a sustainable and green way.”

Source: <http://theglobalfool.com/double-blue-blue-economy-and-blue-growth/>